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ABSTRACT

An 8-year ethnographic study in two rural Iowa towns examined the incorporation of recently arrived Mexicans and Mexican Americans into the social, economic, and political life of the community. Relocating to work in a nearby food processing plant, the newcomers altered the ethnic composition of this formerly homogeneous area. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, informal conversations, observation of community events, and review of government documents and local newspapers. Conceptual frames for the study include modes of incorporation, racial formation and racialization, and social regulation. The experiences of Mexican and Mexican American newcomers demonstrate how local social regulatory activities circumscribe the ways in which these new residents can make claims as permanent members of the community. These social regulatory activities construct the racialized, gendered, and class-specific grounds on which Mexican Americans can earn a living wage, access social services and education, and gain a political voice. Various experiences of the newcomers are described, including recruitment to the food processing plant, poor working conditions, disadvantages arising from limited English proficiency, local resistance to providing English as a second language classes or offering Spanish in school, lack of proficient translators in the school and community, harassment by the police and the Immigration and Naturalization Service, lack of affordable housing, harassment and discrimination during use of health and social services, biased attitudes of educators, and community fears about Hispanic youth. (Contains 116 references.) (SV)

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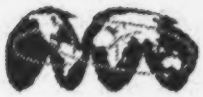

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Economic Restructuring and Racialization: Incorporation of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the Rural Midwest

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Economic Restructuring and Racialization: Incorporation of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the Rural Midwest

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Introduction

Economic restructuring contributes to a shifting international division of labor that is reshaping the racial-ethnic composition of communities across the U.S. Mexicans have been particularly hard hit by the processes of displacement and wage depreciation in regions across their country. As a consequence of their displacement from other regions coupled with the development of low wage food processing and related industries in the rural Midwest, Latinos are forming a growing proportion of migrants to the Midwest.[1] As a result rural communities in the Midwest with a traditionally white European American population have been forced to confront their own racism and manage ethnic tensions previously seen as the problems of urban areas or rural communities in the South, Southwest, and West. How these predominantly white European American communities deal with the growing racial-ethnic diversity will affect the sense of community cohesion and quality of life enjoyed by all residents regardless of racial-ethnic background. The climate for non-white and non-English speaking migrants to the rural Midwest reflects the xenophobic political and social climate in the US more generally. First captured in California's Proposition 187 and embedded in the 1996 welfare legislation that initially denied legal immigrants and their children access to public assistance intensifies the resistance faced by anyone who addresses the problems of non-white or non-English speaking migrants and immigrants in any US community.[2]

This presentation centers the standpoint of Mexican and Mexican American residents in rural Iowa and consequently argues for a broadened definition of the state that captures the multiple arenas through which these residents are incorporated into the United States economy, society and polity. This

process of incorporation occurs at the local community level and involves ongoing social regulatory activities that circumscribe the ways in which these new residents can make claims as permanent members of this small rural town. These local social regulatory activities construct the racialized, gendered and class specific grounds upon which the Mexicans and Mexican Americans can earn a living wage, access social provisions and gain a political voice to protect their status as legitimate members of the local polity. Shifting the standpoint to those who are often viewed only as the already constituted targets of specific state intervention offers a vivid angle from which to explore the complex processes through which citizenship or legal resident status is constructed and citizenship or residence claims legitimated.

Theoretical Goals and Methodological Considerations

The overall aim of the intellectual project is to develop stronger links between analyses of global political economic forces, institutional level studies of the state, and micro-level investigations – not a modest goal, but a vital one if we are to understand how different racial-ethnic groups are incorporated into or prevented from making claims on the state (Fraser 1989; Omi and Winant 1986; Peattie and Rein 1983). The specific analysis presented here is based on an eight year ethnographic study in Midtown, a pseudonym for a small town in rural Iowa.[3]

In 1990, a local food processing plant expanded in Midtown which provided employment for Mexican and Mexican American workers who found their way to the town through informal networks and active recruitment by the plant owners.[4] The increased presence of Mexicans and Mexican Americans as permanent residents altered the ethnic composition of this formerly ethnically homogenous town. The demographic changes provided the basis for a longitudinal study of social restructuring of class, gender, and race-ethnicity. The ethnography highlights the vibrant social processes and cultural

beliefs that shape responses as well as resistance to the economic and social changes (Naples 1994).

I begin with a discussion of the theoretical frameworks which inform my analysis and provide an overview of the economic restructuring of the rural Midwest and the racial-ethnic changes that resulted from economic development practices before moving to an analysis of the diverse arenas through which Mexican and Mexican Americans negotiate incorporation into the economic, civic, and social life of rural Iowa.

Towards an Intersectional Analysis of Migration

A prime difficulty we face in capturing the complex ways Mexicans and Mexican Americans are incorporated into the United States economy, society and polity, in addition to the fragmentation of policy arenas and the diversity of the population, is the fragmentation of social science knowledge itself. At the very least, we need to take into account the international division of labor that is embedded in wider processes of economic change and modes of incorporation. Specific modes of incorporation are themselves embedded in social regulatory processes that span localities, regions, nation-states and international practices. All of these processes are, in turn, woven in and through class-based, racialized and gendered processes which are embedded in local policy regimes and less visible community practices. The state, broadly defined and locally manifested in diverse community processes, actively provides the grounds for economic restructuring by supporting and regulating certain social and economic relations. Implicated in these multiple processes are the following literatures: political economy; international relations; immigration and migration studies; labor studies; community studies; rural sociology; race-ethnicity studies; gender studies; postcolonial analyses; and theories of the state. Furthermore, there are disciplinary variations within each of these areas. Economists, sociologists, political scientists, historians, anthropologists, social geographers, although not always mutually exclusive actors, may explore each of these areas of study asking somewhat different questions and highlighting

contrasting features. However, a fully embedded analysis must incorporate economic, political, historical, sociological, as well as anthropological frames of reference or at least be aware of the limits of the specific disciplinary frame chosen.

This analysis is influenced by studies arguing for the embeddedness of economic processes, racial formation and postconialism theories, and materialist feminist theory. By shifting the standpoint to those who are the targets of state interventions certain less visible features of state activity are brought into view. By uncovering how wider economic and political processes are manifested in everyday life, we can sharpen our vision on the multiple sites through which the state operates and better articulate the relationship between the market, state, and other social institutions. The ethnographic detail gathered in the course of eight years of field work enhances the view. Indepth interview data form one component of the analysis. Data gathered and analyzed also include archival and economic information, census data, local newpapers for the years 1980-1998, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) reports for the years 1976-1998, police reports, observations from community events including community meetings, social services, Bible study and church-related events, local fairs and annual July 4th parades and informal conversations with numerous local residents, community workers, and county employees.

Three overlapping theoretical frameworks offer conceptual tools through which we can examine the experiences of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in this study: (1) political economy of globalization and immigration[5] and embedded political economy framework,[6] (2) racial formation theory[7] and (3) feminist materialist and postcolonial theories.[8] Conceptual frames drawn from these literatures are respectively: modes of incorporation, racial formation and racialization, and social regulation. All three conceptual frames include attention to the role of the state in organizing racial-ethnic relations. Although these concepts derive from somewhat different traditions, upon further examination they are highly interrelated as the following discussion demonstrates.

Fragmented Knowledge and Conceptual Tools

Immigration scholars draw on the concept "modes of incorporation" to capture the process by which different immigrant groups are inserted at various levels within a particular society (Portes and Rumbaut 1990). Portes and Grosfoguel (1994:62) explain that:

> These levels encompass government polices, mainstream attitudes toward the newcomers, and the size and characteristics of the preexisting ethnic community. Modes of incorporation interact with class origins, affecting the extent to which individual skills brought from the home country can be put to use productively and the chances for acquiring new ones.

While the concept of "modes of incorporation" offers a place to start our exploration, it does not help us conceptualize how various racial-ethnic groups are incorporated in non-economic spheres of everyday life.

Portes and associates, in particular, have been sensitive to the complex interactions of relations within and across different migrant groups (Portes and Bach 1985; Portes and Rumbaut 1990; also see Light et al. 1994; Robinson 1993). This sensitivity is especially valuable in our investigations of the complex relationships between those from rural and urban areas in Mexico and Mexican Americans whose economic histories, length of time in the United States, and regional backgrounds also vary greatly. The experiences of Mexicans and Mexican Americans are differentiated further as a consequence of the modes of incorporation into different regional economies with divergent ethnic characteristics (Portes and Grosfoguel 1994:62). These characteristics include the local patterns of racial-ethnic diversity and the self-identities of the different residents (see Glenn 1992). These dynamics are highly salient in rural Iowa where the longstanding homogeneity of the small towns preclude prior experiences with the incorporation of non-white racial-ethnic groups.[9]

Racial formation theory provides another level of analysis that helps capture "the processes by which racial meanings are attributed, and racial identities assigned" and infused in material practices and institutional arrangements in a particular society (Winant 1994:23). According to racial formation

theory, race is "a constituent of the individual psyche and of relationships among individuals, . . . an irreducible component of collective identities and social structures" and "contested throughout social life." Racialization, the process by which racial formation proceeds, is fluid and multifaced and can be understood as, among other things, "a repertoire of coercive social practices driven by desires and fears, as a framework for class formation, or as an ideology for nation building and territorial expansion, to name but a few" (p.43). Omi and Winant also recognize that racialization is embedded in global processes and racial projects that circumscribe "the political terrain upon which racially defined groups could mobilize within civil society, thus constituting these groups as outside civil society." The concept of racialization provides a conceptual tool that allows us to map the changing and contested negotiation of different racial-ethnic groups and subgroups as they insert themselves and are inserted into new social, political and economic environments (also see Lowe 1996).

Both conceptual frames highlight the role of the state in the processes of incorporation and racialization and therefore overlap with some of the analytic projects found within the materialist feminist theories of the state. Feminist state theorists demonstrate the "multi-tiered," class, gendered and racial subtexts of the state[10] yet rarely turn their attention to the effect of state intervention on migrant and immigrant groups or native peoples.[11] While dialogue between feminists and comparative researchers (not always mutually exclusive categories) further deepen the study of social policy regimes across nation-states as Ann Orloff argues (1993), we are left with the need to account for differences by race-ethnicity within and across regions and nation-states (see Glenn 1992). By drawing on the conceptual tools offered in the political economy framework and racial formation theory, we can broaden our approaches to incorporate the material structural conditions and discursive fields that shape the lives of Latinos and other "transnational" racial-ethnic groups.[12] A key concept that provides the bridge between these analytic frames is that of social regulation, a concept that runs through each of the

theoretical frames outlined above.

Theories of the American welfare state offer numerous and contrasting accounts of the dynamics underlying the social regulatory role of the state. Some authors privilege the dynamics of class (Piven and Cloward 1971/1993), others center gender inequality (Miller 1990), while others see "the politics of racial inequality" as the "governing force" (Quadagno 1994:188). Those who adopt a class-centered view highlight the social regulatory role of the state with particular attention to labor (Piven and Cloward 1971/1993). Feminists and other researchers have expanded these approaches to highlight how the state is built upon other social dynamics, most particularly gender and racial inequalities.[13] Rather than privileging class, gender or race, Mimi Abramovitz (1988) argues that the dynamics of class, race, and gender were intertwined throughout the history of the American welfare state.

In the embedded political economy framework, social regulation refers to nonmarket relationships and arrangements that provide "the possibilities for particular production relations in the market" (Truelove 1992:12; also see Mingione 1991; Thomas 1985). Theorists working from the embedded political economy framework effectively embed macro-structural economic processes in local political, social and cultural practices. For example, Enzo Mingione (1991:8) challenges the paradigm of the self-regulating market by demonstrating that "market behaviour occurs according to rules that are not set by the market itself but by the socio-regulatory contexts." Mingione further demonstrates how the socio-regulatory contexts structurally limits the productivity of the competitive market and creates the conditions for "the develpment of the 'second economy' and . . . alternative associative interest groups . . . which . . . challenge the **status quo** of the regulatory system" (p.119).

In one sense, the definition of social regulation used under the embedded political economy framework[14] is broader than the definition utilized by theorists of the state since it includes arenas other than the state. As Enzo Mingione (1991) points out, in addition to the state, socio-regulatory contexts

include trade unions, families, kinship, associations and local communities. Furthermore, as I will demonstrate, these contexts involve processes of incorporation and racialization. In another sense, since the focus on the embedded political economic framework is on the relationships between market and nonmarket relationships, dimensions such as gender relations, sexuality, household organization, culture, and race-ethnicity are often explored only as they regulate or are regulated by certain economic arrangements. In contrast, theorists of the state are interested in how state activities regulate social relations as well as economic relations although feminist authors in particular recognize the complex interplay of these so-called separate spheres (see Abramovitz 1988).

Racial formation theory does not offer an explicit definition of social regulation; however, Omi and Winant (1987:67-68) demonstrate how a racial order is "organized and enforced" through reciprocity between micro-level expressions of race and macro-level social structural formations. Their discussion offers us another angle on social regulatory processes as they organize the "relations of ruling"[15] within a political, economic and social environment that privileges white racial-ethnic groups. They clarify their argument further by noting that:

> The micro- and macro-levels, however, are only analytically distinct. In our lived experiences, in politics, in culture, in economic life, they are continuous and reciprocal. Racial discrimination, for example, considered as a "macro-level" set of economic, political, and ideological/cultural practices -- has obvious consequences for the experiences and identities of individuals. It affects racial meanings, intervenes in "personal life," is interpreted politically, for example. Another example, racial identity -- considered as a "micro level" complex of individual practices and "consciousness" -- shapes the universe of collective action. The panoply of individual attributes -- from one's patterns of speech or tastes in food or music to the economic, spatial, familial, or citizenship "role" one occupies -- provides the essential themes of political

organization, the elements of economic self-reliance, etc.

Racial meanings infuse individual and collective action as well as social regulatory processes. The process of racialization as embodied in the implementation of immigration policies frequently conflates legal status with generalized racial-ethnic categories. Hence all those of Mexican descent are suspect and potentially treated as "illegal" or "nondeserving." Such treatment regulates the lives of all legal residents and citizens of Mexican heritage as much as it controls undocumented workers and their families. Many legal residents are deterred from making legitimate claims for social provisions or civil rights due to discriminatory practices and fear of reprisal. Since such policies and practices are themselves built upon contested racial meanings they themselves are open to contestation. However, to uncover the social regulatory racialization processes as well as the points of contestation, we must shift the standpoint from policy arenas, nation-states, and global political economic processes to the everyday world of those groups most marginalized by state activities. With knowledge generated from their point of view, we can begin subsequent analyses of the state with a sharper focus and wider lens.

I approach this study through the lens of Dorothy Smith's institutional ethnographic approach which avoids reifying systems of oppressions and argues for a contextualized and historicized approach that permits exploration of women's "relationship to multiple patriarchies as well as to international economic hegemonies" (Grewal and Kaplan 1994:17) as postcolonial feminist theorists recommend. An institutional ethnographic approach also responds to postcolonial feminist cautions against viewing the formulation of the "global-local as a monolithic formation" which "may also erase the existence of multiple expressions of 'local' identities and concerns and multiple globalities" (Grewal and Kaplan 1994:11).An institutional ethnographic approach also responds to postcolonial feminist cautions against viewing the formulation of the "global-local as a monolithic formation" which "may also erase the existence of multiple expressions of 'local' identities and concerns and multiple globalities" (Grewal and

Kaplan 1994:11).[16] Despite my best intentions, what I offer in this paper is only a partial view of the complicated processes outlined above. Following a brief historical overview and description of the research site, I will highlight the following: (a) the process of economic development and shifting recruitment strategies of the local employer; (b) the contradictory effects of INS and other social regulatory interventions in this small town; (c) language as a contested terrain; and (d) community level responses that influence processes of racial formation in Midtown.

A Brief History of Mexican/Mexican American Labor in the U.S.

The history of Mexican and Mexican Americans in the United States is influenced by a complex pattern of colonization, proletarianization, agricultural industrialization and disparate migratory flows. This complex pattern contributes to a profound diversity of experiences within the Mexican and Mexican American community that poses a challenge to any comprehensive historical analysis. Further complicating the task is regional differences in the modes of incorporation of Latino labor in the United States. For example, much has been written about the experiences and incorporation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the West or Southwest with particular attention to their agricultural labor (Acuna 1981; Boswell and Jorjani 1988; Massey 1987; Montejano 1986; Portes and Bach 1985; Robinson 1993; Thomas 1985). Less is known about the more recent incorporation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the Midwest. However, contemporary migration patterns are intertwined with historic patterns. The Mexicans and Mexican Americans moving to Midtown illustrate the complexity of these interrelated patterns.

Diego Medina was born in San Luis Potosi and entered the United States illegally in 1989 at the age of fourteen. He first arrived in Houston, stayed there for a month then moved to Tennessee for work cutting cucumbers and bell peppers. When that job ended he returned to Texas for a year before relocating to Georgia to cut tobacco, then he harvested tomatoes, then tobacco, then tomatoes again,

then tobacco. Medina explained that he and his brother "didn't like it [in Georgia] and since we had to support my mother [who remained in Mexico with other siblings] we went to another place" where they harvested tomatoes again, then squash, before moving to Iowa for a job detassling corn. He explained:

> We met up with a man who asked us if we wanted to go to Iowa, so we said: "Sure let's go!" And we came. . . So I stayed there for a while then there was no work. Only tomatoes, where they make the tomatoes in Muscatine, Iowa. Then we said: "Let's go to Florida." And some friends and I said: "Let's buy a car, us three, and then we can sell it when we get there." We followed behind the others but the car broke down on the road and they left and we never caught up with them. So we came back to Muscatine that we were familiar with. We met some other campesinos, and they told us there was work here in Midtown. So we said: "Let's go."

Medina's work and migratory history spans the short time frame of 1989 to 1993. However, his experiences mirror those reported by another Midtown worker who first entered the United States in 1979 from Jalisco, Mexico. Manuel Gomez's first job was in Glenview, Texas. He moved from Glenview to Houston. From Houston he moved to Virginia then to Iowa for detassling and next to California for work at a race track in Santa Ana before hearing about the factory work in Midtown from his wife's brother who was working at the plant. With the exception of the job he had at the race track, Gomez primarily found employment as a field worker. ". . . [A]pples, tomatoes, I always worked in the labor" he explained. When asked what he thought were the advantages to living in Midtown he said:

> I'm just here because my family is here, my in-laws and all. Well, I don't see any advantage -- just that I'm here with them. We're all together.

The growth of agribusiness in the rural Midwest (Krebs 1991) contributed to a new settlement pattern for workers like Medina and Gomez. However, as their stories illustrate, this new pattern must be

understood within the historical context of varying migratory flows of workers and their families from different regions in Mexico, Texas, and other states in the United States

Mexican residents of northern Mexico were granted United States citizenship following acquisition of their homelands in 1848 and, according to Boswell and Jorjani (1988:178), were "relatively" spared the "state-organized violent discrimination" and genocide perpetrated on the Native Americans. Initially Mexican Americans farmed small plots of land and were slow to be incorporated into the growing industrial labor force. In contrast, Mexican migrants were more rapidly drawn into the labor market. Increased farm consolidation and mechanization hastened the proletarianization of Mexicans and Mexican Americans yet did not alter the demand for their seasonal labor to harvest crops. Processes of racialization embedded in immigration policies and labor practices contributed to the persistent migratory status of Mexican workers. While their labor formed a core requirement of capitalist agricultural production, a large percentage was employed as seasonal and part time low wage earners. Agricultural workers, omitted from coverage by the National Labor Relations Act passed in 1935, continue to fall outside the protection of federal labor legislation (Thomas 1985).

Following World War II, Mexican immigrants were more likely to be incorporated into industrial jobs as semiskilled operators and laborers (Boswell and Jorjani 1988; Robinson 1993). The bracero program, developed in response to the labor shortage experienced during World War II, was established as ongoing national policy in 1951 with the passage of Public Law 78 (Thomas 1985). This program continued to provide cheap Mexican labor from 1942 until 1965. Meanwhile, "[t]he limited ability of the state to exclude Mexican migration across the border enable[d] employers to legally discriminate in working conditions and use the INS to discourage or raid unions" (Boswell and Jorjani 1988:179). Further, as Thomas (1985:65) reports: ". . . the combined state/employer regulation of labor supply heightened the distinction between the rights accorded to citizens (as formally free labor

market participants) and the noncitizen braceros (who were accorded neither equal protection before the law nor market freedom)." The end of the bracero program in 1965 did not end the flow of Mexican labor into the United States. In fact, Thomas demonstrates that the termination of the program "coincided with the opening of the undocumented floodgate" effectively increasing the number of politically and economically vulnerable workers (p.106). Such migratory flows must also be understood within the context of the development of the export processing zone along the Mexican side of the border with the United States. The Border Industrial Program which set aside twelve miles along the border for the development of maquiladoras was created in 1965 following the end of the barcero program (see Fernández-Kelly 1983).

The process of urbanization increased the presence of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in many Southwestern cities where in many cases they now comprise a majority of the population and therefore a greater opportunity to make demands on the state. However, their ability to successfully access political and social resources is limited by unequal distribution of resources to areas with a large non-white ethnic population, the further eroding of support for the welfare state, and discriminatory practices in the provision of health, education, housing, and other social services (see Robinson 1993). Due in part to economic restructuring as well as ongoing social regulatory processes including employment discrimination, layoffs and community resistance, Mexican and Mexican American workers continue to migrate to different regions in the United States in search of better opportunities. Many now see such opportunities in the rural Midwest. Some of these workers and their families are now becoming more permanent members of the communities in which the factories are located although such status does not guarantee acceptance (see Naples 1994). Others continue the migratory pattern finding new opportunities in other areas in the Midwest or returning to their point of origin. These patterns of settlement and migration result from a combination of the regional economy, dynamics of gender, age

and household structure, social network, and social regulatory processes as well as personal experiences with employment and other forms of discrimination.

The economic and demographic changes evident in Midtown are part of larger shifts in capitalist productive processes captured under the term "global economic restructuring." Manifestations of economic restructuring are a weakening of organized labor and decline in formal labor contracts; increase in low waged, part time and informal labor; a expanding international division of labor; a growing gap between the rich and poor; and disinvestment in the welfare state (Bluestone and Harrison 1982, 1987; Bonanno 1987; Fitchen 1991; Friedmann and McMichael 1989; Karger 1991). In the rural Midwest, economic changes include an increased mechanization and consolidation of farms, loss of union and skilled industrial agricultural jobs, decline in local small businesses, and withdrawal of local state services (Davidson 1990; Sassen 1990). The increased landlessness of rural residents in the Midwestern United States alongside the growing poverty of rural communities contribute to the increased availability of a low waged and unprotected labor force often associated with the "peripheralization of the core" (Sassen 1990; also see Kingslover 1992).

Restructuring of the rural economy brought a return of some manufacturing in rural communities during the 1970s. Throughout the 1980s many factories were closed or relocated to other countries. Simultaneously, local and state economic development groups actively pursued new employers to relocate their businesses and factories to rural communities in the Midwest. Financial incentives included tax abatements, provision of lands and industrial buildings, and guarantees of nonunion labor.[17] For the most part, these efforts proved unsuccessful. When successful, the jobs provided by these new businesses and factories failed to offer above minimum wage. Rather than provide jobs for local residents, many of these new factories are actively recruiting or otherwise attracting workers from other areas. In addition to Mexican and Mexican American workers, Asian, Asian American and African

American workers are also moving to the Midwest for employment (Stull, Broadway, and Erickson 1992).

Their arrival in these small rural towns often leads to heated discussions about the efficacy of economic development activities and anger at the state agencies for promoting such strategies. However, the incorporation of different racial-ethnic groups into the rural community also increases awareness of the local manifestations of global political economic forces (Naples 1994). The contradictions are frequently played out in community level responses to state intervention as they influence processes of racial formation. Among these sites of contestation are: the economic development corporation, the police, state licensing agencies, the schools, and health and social services as well as employment practices, housing provision, gender relations and language. Following a description of the field site and the three waves of Mexican and Mexican American migration to Midtown, I will briefly underscore the role played by these different arenas in shaping the Mexicans' and Mexican Americans' incorporation into this small rural town.

The Field Site

The analysis is based on eight years of community-based ethnographic research in two rural towns in Southwest Iowa, each with a population of approximately 1250. The two towns were chosen for this study on the basis of the following criteria: distance from a regional center, decline in farm and business ownership, increasing rate of poverty between 1970 and 1985 when contrasted with the state as a whole, contrasting official rates of unemployment, presence of low wage industrial employment, and presence of an active economic development commission. For the purposes of this paper, I will limit my description of the field site to Midtown.

Midtown is 95 miles from a major airport and approximately two hours from the nearest major cities. The closest interstate is a distance of 50 miles. Crown County (a pseudonym for the county in

which the town is located) is an agriculturally-dependent region and was profoundly affected by the 1980s "farm crisis" (Lasley 1987). For example, Crown County lost more than 100 farms between 1980 and 1990. During this period, farm income as a proportion of personal income by industry for County residents displayed an erratic pattern that reached a record low of ten percent in 1983 and peaked at 41 percent in 1987.[18] Of greater interest is the changes in sources for nonfarm personal income. From 1976 to 1989, government and other services grew as the major source of nonfarm income. In 1991, Crown County relied on government assistance to a greater extent than on local taxes for roads, schools and other services (Siebert 1992).

In 1989, Midtown's poverty rate of 14.4 percent was slightly higher than for the state as a whole (the median for Iowa was 11.5) (see table 1). On the other hand, Midtown's official unemployment rate for 1989 was lower than for Iowa as a whole (see table 2). The overall unemployment rate for Midtown reported in the 1990 census was 1.7 (2.0 for males and 1.3 for females) while the state's rate was 4.5 (5.0 for males and 4.3 for females). The higher poverty rate and lower unemployment rate indicate the presence of a large working poor population in Midtown. The low unemployment rate explains, to a certain extent, the plant owners' need to actively recruit new workers outside the region. Further, the modes of recruitment for Mexican and Mexican American workers provided a large clearly identifiable and renewable workforce for the quickly expanding plant.

Midtown's population of approximately 1,250 residents represents a decline of approximately fifteen percent over the last ten years. This decline is three times greater than for the state as a whole which lost approximately five percent of its population over the last ten years. Community residents and Iowa State University Extension staff attribute the decline primarily to the out-migration of young college educated residents and families in their child bearing years. Almost one third of the population of Midtown is 65 years of age or older, approximately twice the rate for the state as a whole (Burke,

Goudy and Hansen 1992).

The 1990 census only identified thirty non-white residents over the age of fifteen in Midtown. The 1990 census recorded only eighteen Midtown residents of "Hispanic origin" who were sixteen years of age and over (Burke, Goudy and Hansen 1992). On the other hand, additional evidence contradicts this limited count. For example, one of the owners of the Midtown food processing plant reported in a 1991 interview that the plant employed approximately twenty Mexican and Mexican American workers. The census was conducted just after the plant expanded and before many current Mexican and Mexican American workers moved to the area. In a more recent demographic survey, the number of Hispanics in Crown County (the pseudonym for the county in which Midtown is located) had increased from 46 in 1990 to 70 in 1997. In contrast to the official statistics, a number of informants reported that the Mexican and Mexican American population now totals more than twelve percent of the town's total population or approximately 150 residents.

Three waves of migration, each with a different gender composition, household and age structure, and recruitment pattern, were observed in Midtown. Young men from rural towns of the Mexican states of Guanajuato, Jalisco and San Luís Potosí were the first to arrive in Midtown. Their numbers grew and by the start of 1992 more than 100 Mexicans and Mexican Americans resided in Midtown. Several months later, agents from the INS were contacted about the possibility that illegal workers were employed in the food processing plant. Informants report that as many as 60 Mexicans were arrested and a large percentage were undocumented and subsequently deported. The deportations created a labor shortage and by recruiting workers from Texas and other regions in the United States, the plant owners identified documented Mexican workers and Mexican American citizens who then formed the second wave of migrants to the town. Some spouses, other family members, and women workers were attracted during the second wave. Many workers in the second

wave quickly moved on to other jobs in the Midwest that offered better pay. The most recent wave consists of Mexican American workers and their families who were recruited primarily from Texas and through the personal networks of employees. This group now makes up about half of the plant's Latino employees. According to informants, the other half are comprised of documented Mexican workers and Mexican Americans from other areas of the United States

Economic Development and Racial Formation

With state and local tax funds, Midtown's economic development commission supported the expansion of a locally owned food processing plant. The expansion was made possible by the plant's merger with a large east coast based company. The new factory features a computerized system for mixing ingredients and preparing foods for regional and international distribution. Before the expansion, most ingredients were purchased from local farmers. However, the main food supplies for the expanded plant are now purchased from several large suppliers in neighboring states.

According to most long term residents interviewed, the plant owners claimed that the expansion would provide jobs for local residents. However, within a short time, it was clear that the local labor supply was insufficient and another source of labor would be required.[19] Erin Landers, one of the plant owners, denied community residents' assertions that they were recruiting Mexican workers. In 1991, Landers explained that they could start up another line on the factory floor if they felt the white community residents would not protest the increase in the number of Mexican workers. In an interview two years later, the employer reported that "things have improved tremendously this year and we're back on track again." The factory was operating at full capacity with an expanded Mexican American workforce.[20]

Mexicans and Mexican Americans who migrated to Midtown learned that the food processing plant was hiring new workers from their social networks and through ads in local papers. The State of

Iowa discourages out-of-state recruitment by requiring employers to prove they cannot find Iowa residents for the jobs. If the employers can demonstrate that their efforts to recruit Iowa workers were unsuccessful, they are given permission to announce the job openings through a network linked to other state employment offices. The Iowa Division of Labor Services is responsible for enforcing the law. However, they only investigate violations when complaints are made. Therefore, since Midtown's plant management deny ever recruiting workers and no complaints have been filed they faced no challenge to their out-of-state recruiting practices.

Denying that the plant actively recruited out-of-state, co-owner Landers believed that ". . . a lot of our Mexican people, our Hispanics, do start out in the cities and then by word of mouth find out about us. They like the quieter rural life." Landers' account was contradicted by workers we interviewed. Many reported seeing an ad in English or Spanish or hearing about an advertisement recruiting workers for the plant. Anna Ortega described how she learned about the plant:

> I decided to come here with my daughter, my son and my husband because this job announcement was in the newspaper. It came in the newspaper in Laredo, Texas and it had a little sign saying "Southwestern town in Iowa now hiring full-time employees for [food processing] company" and it had the toll-fee number to call. So we called. Got hired. We did the fax machine applications. They told us "Come on down. You have a job." So we came . . . here.

Once a number of workers were recruited, the plant management began to encourage the workers to mobilize their social networks to attract new workers. For example, informants revealed that they were frequently asked by management if they had other family members or friends who needed work and would be willing to move to Midtown. Several months after the initial interview in 1993, Ortega reported that she now worked as an "informal" labor recruiter. She claimed that she had gone

to Laredo three times within the previous five months to bring back workers for her employer. On each trip she recruited approximately fourteen new workers who she charged between $175-$275 each. Ortega explained:

> The reason that I brought people down here was because the economy is real bad there right now. There's a lot of unemployment. People have to get out of there.

The recruitment processes generated a permanent Mexican and Mexican American population in Midtown. It also linked the new Latino community to Laredo and other Texas towns. The recruitment processes further contribute to migration flows to other areas in the Midwest as new job possibilities emerged.

For the most part the Mexican and Mexican American factory workers were placed in the least desirable jobs in the plant. Racism is also embedded in less measurable verbal and behavioral abuse by supervisors and other white North European American workers. Anna Ortega explained:

> . . .I was seeing all this that she [supervisor] was doing to me and my daughter on a daily basis. Eight hours a day. It really got to me and I felt really bad, 'cause I know that she doesn't like us because we're brown, right. She has not said that she's prejudiced. She has not insinuated that she is prejudiced. . . [A] person that's prejudiced is not going to tell you that they're prejudiced, right, because they know it's against the law to do that. And they're not going to get fined for it. They're not going to get in trouble if they're a boss, you know. So, they're going to try to tell you they're prejudiced in other ways.

Those recruited from distant towns and cities have few employment alternatives in the area so if they are dissatisfied with the job at the plant and therefore must migrate again if they hope to improve their situations. Some workers in the second wave of recruitment did relocate.

The workers were perceived by the owners as more eager and willing than their white North

European American counterparts. Landers asserted that the Mexican and Mexican American workers exhibit a "good work ethic" and are more willing than their white North European American co-workers to put up with the long hours and the repetitive work. Ironically, it is the so-called "good work ethic" of the white rural Midwesterners that is used to sell potential employers on the advantages of opening new businesses and factories in Iowa (Iowa Department of Economic Development 1989).

The Mexican and Mexican American workers were aware of the "gringo" construction of their "work ethic." Anna Ortega explained why the Mexican worker can be exploited more than his or her "gringo" counterpart:

> The thing that there is here is the American who is prejudiced against the Mexican, that doesn't like the Mexican. But, like always, when it's to their advantage, they accept us because we work ourselves to death. . . The gringo will go home after his eight hours are done. Why? Because he's tired. He no longer has strength. And the Mexican, even if your screwing him to hell, still you can extract strength from him. Why? Because he has his family. Them. They have farms, animals, government assistance. They have it all. This is something that never ends.

Contradictory Consequences of State Interventions

> The [INS] come as civilians. But one already knows. One knows because they will come in a car with two people in a blazer [suburban] with the windows tinted. So one knows too, because it has happened to many. They come with license plates from Omaha, Nebraska. They have come numerous times but they haven't found anyone because there aren't illegal people here now. They've left because they're scared. I've got a permit and I'm still afraid to have a Migra [INS agent] at my side. I have my permit and I feel it's ok. But if I see the Migra I turn around. (Juan Sanchez, 23 year old).

Juan Sanchez and other Mexican and Mexican American residents in Midtown witnessed the

deportation of many co-workers when the INS "raided" the town in the Spring of 1992. INS officials waited in the parking lot outside the plant and picked up Mexican and Mexican American residents walking along the streets and playing in the school yard. Landers, a life long resident of the area, believed that a local white resident who resented the Mexicans and Mexicans contacted the INS. Landers reported that this resident believed, as many other Midtown residents did, that all the workers were undocumented because:

> . . . people who are biased think all Mexicans are illegal. Matter of fact, they use that term. [They say]: "We want you to get these illegal aliens out of here." And unfortunately when Immigration came in and checked some documents, even though we followed all the procedures and everything appeared to be in order, there were a few whose documents were illegal and that was a real valuable learning experience for us because we learned even more what to look for and I probably drive Immigration nuts because now I call to verify every document just to be safe because I just don't want to encounter any more problems.

Landers described the "raid" as follows:

> Immigration did what they were asked to do. They came in and literally raided our business. They had vans surrounding the building and people on the roof and it was absolutely a terrible experience and they came on shift changes. They knew our shift hours and the people from first shift that were leaving. We even saw them stop and handcuff one of the individuals who was an American citizen who happened to be Hispanic.

The tension created by this and other "raids" in Midtown generated a sense of anxiety among everyone including those with United States citizenship and working papers. Since legal residents had also been picked up in the raids and driven to Omaha before they were released without transportation home, their fears were well-founded. As Landers observed:

> And like the one I told you about that he ended up being an American citizen, but they grabbed him out of his car, handcuffed him, put him in their vehicle, . . . and ran a check on him and those guys were scared to death saying: "I'm a citizen! I'm an American citizen!" And these folks spoke English -- they'd learned that in the home, but they were scared to death they were going to be sent back to Mexico and shouldn't have been.

The consequences of this anxiety was experienced by research assistant Lionel Cantú who on his first trip to Midtown drove into town in a four-door sedan with Omaha plates. Initially he could not find many Mexican and Mexican Americans willing to talk with him until word-of-mouth confirmed that he was not an INS agent. As Cantú (1994:17) reports: "Carmen told me that she stayed locked up in her home for almost a week until she learned from her social network that I was not with the INS."

According to an official working at INS's regional office in Omaha, Nebraska, they received an anonymous tip about illegal workers at the Midtown plant and initiated an investigation. Since the investigation was ongoing at the time I interviewed this official, he was unable to offer many details about the nature of the call or the status of the investigation. He did mention that the majority of calls they receive come from local police who are obligated by law to report any illegal resident who is apprehended for a crime or otherwise comes to their attention. In a report in the Midtown newspaper entitled "Immigration officials visit Midtown; police report threat" (Midtown News, Feb. 19, 1992:1), police denied some community residents' accusations that a local family who had been threatened for alleged calling the INS was responsible. The police chief asserted that it was "the police contact with the immigration service that resulted in the recent visit."

The INS raids, subsequent deportations, and ongoing investigation served to regulate the lives of all Mexican and Mexican Americans living in Midtown. INS intervention also made visible the contradictions in the construction of the "outsider" in Midtown (Naples 1996). While INS activities

served to confirm white European American residents' fears that there were, at least initially, many undocumented Mexican workers in the plant, it also highlighted the fact that many other workers were "legitimate" members of the community. According to the Landers:

> . . . what came out of that was the community found out that there were very few whose documents were illegal and that these people really do have a right to be here and they're not being supported by our government. They're earning their own income and paying their own taxes and that's when the attitude started to change with the help of the ministers and the organizations that didn't really work hard to improve relations [before the raid]. Things are entirely different now. We don't hear any problems.

In addition to the growing acceptance of the Mexicans and Mexican Americans on the part of some white residents, several white residents also reported an increased awareness of the oppressive features of INS interventions. For example, Bernice Poster, who was born in the area and now runs a small business in Midtown, described how her consciousness shifted when she tried to help a young Mexican man who was unfairly arrested and deported after he recovered from an accident. She explained:

> I used to think that they [INS] were the good guys, that they were doing a good job. But after what I've been through [in trying to help a young Latino] and seen I think they're all a bunch of rats. I've seen how they treat the Mexicans and no one should be treated like that. They're like the Gestapo.

A similar, and in many ways, more interesting shift in consciousness, occurred in response to perceived unfair treatment of the Mexican and Mexican American residents by the local police. Here the local police, all of whom are residents of the town, were constructed as separate from "the community" in much the same way as the INS agents.

The fear of deportation and harassment by INS official was embedded in ongoing harassment by local police. Even many white European American residents reported that the police targeted Latinos to a greater extent than the white youth who were often the cause of certain problems. Some reported that the Latinos were arrested for drinking when white residents would be escorted home or ignored. But the white residents were, for the most part, unaware of the extent of police harassment. Diego Medina, who was sixteen when he who moved to Midtown in 1991 to work in the plant, reported numerous occasions in which he was verbally harassed or unfairly arrested by the local police. He explained:

> Here, look, even the Americans have said it isn't right that the police are after the Mexicans. If they see a Mexican drinking they'll take him to jail. The Mexican always is blamed. If there is a fight at the bar with the gringos, the Mexicans are blamed. And it's not true. . . . One time when . . . [w]e were drinking in the house and . . . we didn't even have the light on, so that no one would notice, the police came and knocked on the door and we were frightened. They yelled for us to open the door in English and even in Spanish, "Open the door! It's the police!" We hid from fear but they saw that we were there by the door and that they couldn't break it down. The other guy said: "I'm going to watch and when I tell you they're not watching run upstairs." I said: "OK" and went upstairs. . . . Hector was up there too. He was asleep and didn't even know what was going on. The police said to open the door and he did. When he opened the door they had a gun to his head. They arrived and pulled their guns on us and told us not to move. At that point I got mad. I get mad when they do things like that. They told me to put my head down and I told them some things. I said, "What's up? Why don't you move the guns?" I was able to speak some English by then. I could respond. They kept telling me to shut up. They took us to City Hall. They asked what we were doing and I told them we were

> drinking.....What they're doing isn't right. . . [B]ut anyway they never leave the Mexicans in peace. Never. They're better with the Americans.

As the contact between the white European Americans and Latinos increased, the awareness of the police harassment grew. Sympathetic white residents have complained about the unfair treatment and a few have established alliances with some of the Mexican and Mexican American residents.

As a consequence of some encounters between Latino and white youth in the park, the police stepped up their surveillance around the park. However, although white ethnic teenager Martha Glass witnessed some fights in the park and did acknowledge desire for some political presence, she explained why she does not like the police driving by the park "every ten minutes":

> Because I am sure we could protect ourselves. There has never been a shooting here and they don't need to come there every ten minutes. They should come every two hours or something like. They are too overprotective because if you are out talking to someone, they think you are fighting. . . . If they are at the park or something and they are talking in Spanish, they [the police] go up to them and they say that they are saying that they are going to do something. This one kid, he waves to the cops to say hi, and is pulled over and they started yelling at him for doing that. At the park, if the Hispanics are talking and standing around, people think they are talking about them.

The police surveillance of Latino mobility in town is another site of contestion and social control. Miguel Delgado explained his frustration about how the police specifically target Latinos for traffic violations.

> [The police] see a Mexican and they stop him without any reason. . . The police here is always cruising the streets here because they know that a lot of Mexicans live here [near the trailor park].

Juan Garcia, who is one of the longest Latino residents, also complained about the discriminatory practices of the police:

> I don't think it is fair the way they [the police] do it because they are always pulling over Hispanic people. If they see that you go to the bar, they see your car there, they know that you will drink and if they see you driving they will pull you over. They can see all the white people's cars there but they never pull them over. That really irritates me and is the thing that I hate.

State licensing agencies also play a central social regulatory role and contribute to the racialization process. One of the key sites for this dynamic is the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Public transportation is essentially unavailable in rural communities. Most residents require access to motor vehicles for work, grocery shopping, attending church services, or visiting health clinics, et cetera. Consequently, the DMV plays a central role in providing the means by which residents of rural communities can sustain their lives. Obtaining a legal driver's license is even more essential for the Mexicans and Mexican Americans who are often stopped by local police with little or no cause. However, even those possessing legal birth certificates and working papers report further problems when they apply for a license to drive.

Anna Ortega's experience illustrates the problem. Ortega, who is a bilingual United States citizen, was successful in her fight to protect other Mexican Americans from discrimination by DMV officials. She effectively mobilized the political power of the Mexican American community in her hometown of Laredo. Ortega reports:

> [The DMV] tried to take away the U.S. citizenship cards from the Tejanos. I had to bring the judge over and complain. I had to call Immigration. I even had to call the mayor of Laredo, Texas to tell him what was going on here -- that they were picking up our birth certificates saying that they were fake and that we were illegal aliens.

Ortega's story highlights the value of two key resources for the migrants to Midtown: ongoing links between the migrant and settled Mexican American community in other areas of the U.S. and English language proficiency.

Language as a Contested Terrain

During field trips to Midtown in 1991, white North European American residents were especially vocal about the Mexicans' and Mexican Americans' lack of English language proficiency. Many believed that it was simultaneously a sign that these "newcomers" did not want to be a part of the community and a lack of their educational ability. On the other hand, key community actors initially resisted the idea that they should provide English as a Second Language (ESL) courses or hire a Spanish teacher for the local high school. Each of these strategies would cost the town money and, they argued, the Mexicans and Mexican Americans were not going to remain long in Midtown.

Progressive clergy who initially spoke out in support of the new residents were frequently chastised by parishioners who wanted to deny the community's racism, ethnic tensions, or poverty. Steps taken by local officials to address the specific needs of non-English speaking residents such as the hiring of translators for emergency services or English-as-a-second language (ESL) teachers for "limited English proficient" students were all-too-often compromised by the limited Spanish proficiency of translators and ESL teachers.

Maryann Manor, the wife of one of the ministers, was among the community residents who attempted to address the problem (which she defined as a mutual inability to communicate). She spoke a little Spanish. She organized a study group for other community members who wanted to learn the language. Manor reported that she and two other community members approached the plant owners with the idea of offering an ESL course to the workers at the factory but the owners refused the offer.

Workers stated that the plant did not employ a translator. The management called upon

bilingual employees to help them communicate to the non-English speaking workers. In 1991, Landers explained why they had not translated the employee handbook and how the workers learned about the plants policies and employee benefits:

> [B]ecause it is 14 pages long, compressed print. Yeah. So what we do there, when they are hired, when I interview them I go over the things that are in the handbook so they are aware of our policies and benefits and, you know, all of their requirements. Ah, and if they don't speak good enough English then I have somebody that is bilingual help me to translate that and that works real well.

However, some of the workers interviewed who did not speak English reported that they were unable to understand how their pay was calculated or the procedures for overtime. Workers who knew more English helped their co-workers as Efren Palacios reported:

> Well, your companions who are more advanced and know some English [explain the rules, the contract, etc.]. There is one guy who works with me and who helps. There is always a companion who is there to help. If there is a Mexican who needs help with filling out an application, someone goes and tells a companion and they go to help with the application.

Lack of English proficiency did compromise the workers' ability to advocate for their rights in the workplace. When asked what the workers did if they had a complaint, Palacios explained: "Well no, no one complains. No one knows who to go to or any of that." Most of the Mexicans and Mexican Americans also discussed the ways that lack of English proficiency left them vulnerable in their daily interactions with non-Spanish speaking members of the community. Manuel Gomez explained: "We don't know English. We don't know how to read it or speak it so as to defend ourselves."

While there has been some improvement in the provision of ESL classes since the early 1990s, the availability of effective translators remains a problem. Some public officials claim that there are few

if any capable bilingual residents who can serve as translators and ESL teachers, that the limited pool forces them to choose less than adequate personnel. Others insist that the services are more than adequate. While still others resent the need for such services to begin with. However, bilingual Latino residents claim that the translators typically hired by public agencies do not communicate effectively to Spanish speaking residents and often make significant mistakes when interpreting to public officials and health care and service providers. Depending on the context, these mistakes are of more or less significance. Probably the most serious problems occur when these translators are used in the courts. Many Latinos believe that the white European American community in rural Iowa are afraid to hire bilingual Mexicans or Mexican Americans for these important roles because they will not be able to trust their translations. Since they have the power to choose, they inevitably privilege their own fears over the Latinos concrete needs.

Following the onset of the INS investigation, actions were taken to improve the communication between the English-only and Spanish-only residents. Two ESL teachers were hired to work with students in the elementary and high schools. However, as research assistant Erica Bornstein (1994:21) reports:

> One remedial-ed teacher told me the ESL teachers were not helpful in determining the children's prior education or family history, and thus students were frequently placed in the wrong grades. The one language taught in the schools was French. Although there was an obvious perceived need by many of those interviewed, there was an air of resignation towards shifting the language to Spanish. The superintendent of the schools stated that the school board: "..would like to see it added [but] they don't want to see French dropped . . . in fact they actually advertised for a Spanish teacher last year, and we got one person to apply . . . but by the time they accepted the interview that person had another job.

The language barrier proved not only a challenge to the plant management and educators, it also led to a near disaster for a Mexican family when a fire broke out in the home they rented. When they called for assistance, the operator did not understand that they were reporting a fire. The miscommunication was further amplified when the operator thought the caller was confessing to starting the fire herself. She was subsequently arrested for arson and released only after a local resident who spoke some Spanish volunteered to translate. This volunteer was subsequently hired as an interpreter for the city. She is now called in by the police, fire, social and health service workers when there is a problem involving a non-English speaking resident. However, the Mexicans and Mexican Americans complained about her proficiency with Spanish and did not trust that her translation captured what they wanted to communicate.

Several Mexicans interviewed believed that neither the interpreter nor the ESL teacher (who also acts as an interpreter when called upon by city officials) provide accurate translation. Medina explained:

> Everyone knows that I don't like the way they interpret. I tell them what I can and what I can't, well so be it. I don't want them to say something else. Because I know they say one thing and one understands that they're not saying it the way it is. If I say it, I'm going to say it like this, even if it's not good, but you're saying it the way you want it said. They, no, they say other things that aren't so. Friends of mine have told me that they told them to say one thing and that they said something else. And they said, "hey! that's not what I said" so they know it's not right. I don't like them to interpret.

There is one bilingual community worker in town from Texas who, Medina believes, is not used as an interpreter by the city because he's of Mexican descent:

> . . .cause the police think – they don't want him because they think he'll help the Mexicans.

> Since he's Mexican, they think: "No, he'll help them." And then since they're [the two interpreters] gringos they figure it's ok. . . That's bad that they don't want him because he's Mexican.

Some white ethnic residents have been motivated to learn some Spanish in order to communicate more effectively with new neighbors and co-workers. High school student Tim Brown explained his decision to study Spanish as follows:

> It was about when I got into junior high is when it really started [the increase in the number of Latinos moving to Midtown]. . . [I]t is just that you get to be around a different race of people which we had never experienced in grade school. . . I have taken four years of Spanish simply because I would like to know how to speak the language because I have been around them for so long. They are good people. Working with them, they are fine. I have lots of Mexican friends. I don't have a problem with them. . . But there are a lot of people that don't like them at all. They are completely racist and there are a lot of Mexicans that are completely racist against white people, but I don't have a problem with them.

As I illustrate above, language is a crucial site of contestation in which long term residents and newcomers negotiate their relationships to the community and to each other. This process of negotiation goes beyond the limits to communication that language differences pose. In fact, many white North European residents react to the Latinos who speak Spanish among themselves in public spaces with fear. Anglo[21] teenager Martha Glass articulated this fear as follows:

> Some of the Hispanics are kind of rude sometimes and they are talking in Spanish about us and I told them if they wanted to say something, they should say it to my face or don't say it all and they came over and started yelling at us.

School officials and teachers also react with fear when the Latino students speak to each other

in Spanish. We have been told by a number of high school students that Latino students have been suspended for speaking Spanish in school. Not surprisingly, language barriers and cultural differences posed key challenges to the school personnel. Joan Lamm, who had been a teacher in Midtown High for six years, described the challenges as follows:

> What it amounted to in terms of the school, we had several Hispanic students coming in who did not speak English. So it was real frustrating for the teachers because they had not been trained in how to deal with these students, and so we just kind of had to play it by ear, and we did just things that we knew to do with other kids. And the elementary kids are a little different because I think they're more teachable in terms of transferring some of this over to English, but I guess the main problem we've run into we've discovered, obviously the families at home don't speak English so when the kids are here for seven hours a day that's not really enough to make that transfer because they go home and speak Spanish. We also discovered that the parents are not well educated, not even in their own language, so many of them can't read or write in Spanish let alone English. So their language skills are really confused, and um, I don't know, it's just been really hard as teachers who aren't trained to know what to do.

In sum, the struggle over language and communication also runs through interactions with employers, co-workers, city employees and other community residents. Resistance to the civic and social incorporation of Mexican and Mexican American residents in Midtown is firmly entrenched in the provision of housing, health and social services as well as community resident's attempts to control teenagers' activities, especially their dating behavior.

Community Processes of Social Regulation

Mexican workers have always been overrepresented among the migrant agricultural workers in the Midwest yet, for the most part, until recently they have not remained as permanent residents in the

rural communities. As permanent residents, the Mexicans, Mexican Americans and their families face discrimination and harassment from neighbors, business owners, and health care providers as they attempt to make a home in the small towns. While language is a pervasive terrain around which the Latinos struggle for their rights and for community acceptance, housing patterns are a more concrete measure of difference. The shacks and trailers of the migrant labor camps that are huddled at the edges of rural communities remain a symbol of the migrant laborers' marginal status as nonresidents of the communities that employ them. Access to health and social services and attitudes towards interracial dating and Latino youth continue to marginalize the Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Midtown.

Finding a Homeplace: Housing Patterns and Incorporation

Mexican workers have always been overrepresented among the migrant agricultural workers in the Midwest yet, for the most part, until recently they have not remained as permanent residents in the rural communities. As permanent residents, the Mexicans, Mexican Americans and their families face discrimination and harassment from neighbors, business owners, and health care providers as they attempt to make a home in the small towns. The shacks and trailers of the migrant labor camps that are huddled at the edges of rural communities remain a symbol of the migrant laborers' marginal status as nonresidents of the communities that employ them. Housing practices continue to marginalize the Mexicans and Mexican Americans and other low income residents within these small rural towns.

Lack of affordable housing was one of the most consistently mentioned problems in the community. The mayor, city councilmen, social service providers as well as almost every other resident interviewed stressed that Midtown did not have an adequate supply of affordable housing. Furthermore, they did not see how the town could absorb the new workers who were earning minimum wage in the food processing plant and could not afford to pay for the limited housing in the community. Owners of rental property took advantage of the housing shortage to increase rents and alter renting

practices. In response to this perceived need, the economic development corporation worked to establish an apartment complex financed by the Farmers' Home Administration (FmHA) that would provide low to moderate income housing for sixteen families.

In the meantime some workers commuted up to fifty miles to work in the plant. A number of residents were concerned about the problems posed by workers from out-of-town who do not have a sense of "pride in the community." However, when workers and their families were able to find housing in the community a process of segregation and discrimination was put firmly in place. The director of the local social services agency reported that when a low income family qualified for a housing subsidy landlords often refused to make the required repairs to their buildings in order to pass HUD inspection: "[S]ome of them [eligible for HUD assistance] . . . found a house but then the landlord refuses to do anything to pass inspection and so there it is, they're stuck again.." Furthermore, she reported that in response to the expansion at the plant some residents were buying housing and charging "outrageous prices for rent." For example, she explained:

> They have some trailers down here in the trailer court. I mean, they're new trailers -- but they're talking $400.00 a month rent and they're furnished and everything, but, still if you work at [the plant] up here for [minimum wage], there's no way they can afford that.

Some landlords are also taking advantage of the workers needs to share housing with one or more other families. Rather than charge a flat monthly rent, some owners were charging the Mexican and Mexican American renters a monthly fee per adult in the home.

Half of the Mexican and Mexican workers and their family found rental housing in the trailer park. The trailer park was located on the edge of town and provided housing for predominantly low income families. Some members of the community believed that the trailer park is the home for unemployed people who are "not really desiring of a job." Others see it as a place where there are a lot

of problems connected with a supposed low income "lifestyle." As one white community resident explained: "It's just the traditional, the minimum wage workers, that's their lifestyle and that's really what you expect." However, the owners of the trailers did little to correct problems renters found with their homes and the quality of the housing in the trailers continued to deteriorate over the course of our field work. Sister Theresa, one of the two Catholic nuns who commute to Midtown and provide support for low income residents, complained about the bad condition of the trailers: "Some of those trailers should be burned down. When you go in there, it is just like you are almost outside." Another informant explained that:

> I think if you went down and wanted to rent one, they would probably rent you one. . . . They are in bad shape. They have the water shut off to them now. . . . But there has never been any upkeep on those trailers at all. Nothing. . . . . There were holes in the floors and ceilings. They are just terrible.

In fact, by our last field trip in 1998, the trailer park had been closed down.

The economic development groups in Midtown and the neighboring town of Southtown have placed housing high on their agenda. However, the director of the local Housing Authority who is charged with facilitating the development of low income housing reported having trouble finding landlords who will take the low income rental certificates.

> I am having trouble . . . trying to get property owners, landlords to register with our office, that way, if someone comes in, not a property manager, but we can give them a list of people to contact. So far, that is a slow process. I think they are afraid that we will try to force them into doing things. I don't know. . . . There are some vacant houses that I have contacted the owners to try to get them to turn those into rentals and they don't want to bother. They would rather just leave them sit than do anything with them. It is frustrating. Someone drives around and

> sees an empty house, there is a empty house but there is not much we can do unless the owners themselves decide to do something.

The housing segregation and discrimination furthered the racialization process and broadened the stigma placed on all low income residents. The interaction between state and federal programs to assist those living in poverty and community processes to exploit and marginalize these residents left many Mexican and Mexican American families with few housing options and household arrangements available to them.

Caring in the Community: Health and Social Services

Marginalization of the Mexicans and Mexican Americans and their families is furthered through the actions taken and attitudes expressed by health and social service workers in Midtown. A particularly salient episode that demonstrates the process of racialization, the conflation of racism and classism, and social regulatory role of local health workers is described by research assistant Morgan Perry in her field notes (also reported in Naples 1994). Morgan accompanied Deborah Martinez, a white European American women who is married to a Mexican American man employed at a plant, to the local health clinic. Deborah and her husband moved to Midtown with their three children from another part of the state a few months before the interview. Deborah, concerned that her youngest child needed medication for an infection, asked Morgan to drive her to the clinic in town. Morgan records the incident in her field notes:

> I walked in with Deborah and [stayed in the background] as she negotiated with the three women behind the counter. She had barely stated her reason for being there – her baby was having trouble breathing and her ears were infected – when she was told by a woman who didn't bother to look up from her task: "There's no way we can see her today. We're too busy." I looked around at the empty waiting room. No phones were ringing. A second woman

> impatiently asked: "Now what's wrong with the baby?" After several minutes of explaining her [Medicaid] coupon and expressing her concern for her baby's health, she was told to drive to a town 20 miles away to see a doctor. Deborah had never heard of [the town] and didn't have a [dependable car]. . . [I knew that there was] more than one doctor at this clinic. I asked: "What about the other two doctors? Can't one of them see her?" "Oh, yes. They'll be in tomorrow morning." And then one of the women explained: "We can't be too careful with those Mexicans moving in to work at the factory down there. We never know if we'll even see our money." Deborah shook her head. She was relieved to get an appointment for her baby. As we walked back out to the car I told her I was sorry for the way she had been treated. It wasn't herself she was worried about, she told me. When she can't get medical help for her baby, that's when she really worries.

The health care workers' felt free to express their prejudices to this white European American woman and in the presence of another "outsider." Such open expression is rare in rural Iowa. Most racist and classist attitudes were verbalized to others who appeared to share the same racial-ethnic and class backgrounds. With the exception of confrontations between young white European American men and Latinos in the local bars, we seldom observed such direct encounters. On the other hand, the incident illustrated how racialization is an ongoing process woven throughout the daily lives of the community. It also highlighted the perceived threat that the low income families as well as the Latinos posed to the self identity of the other residents. Both somewhat overlapping groups were viewed as "illegitimate" members of the community.

Many of the white residents were aware that the "newcomers" were not to blame for their poverty. They realized that the plant paid only minimum wages and that many of the workers could not sustain their families on one full-time salary from the plant. A number of the white European American

women working at the plant reported that they also received foods stamps and other subsidies to make ends meet. Furthermore, the plant's health care plan only covers the employee. The worker must pay extra for his or her spouse and children. Due to the expense, many workers reported that they could not afford health coverage for other members of their families. However, despite the fact that many of the Mexican American workers were eligible for food stamps, Medicaid and other forms of public assistance, case workers interviewed at the local Department of Human Services office reported that the Mexican Americans were unlikely to apply. A combination of stigma, active discrimination, language barriers, and social regulatory practices of local service providers interfered with their claiming welfare supports.

Another lesson from Deborah Martinez's story is the challenge posed to the town's racial organization by the growing number of dating relationships and marriages between Mexican and Mexican American men and white European American women. When asked if she had experienced any problems because she was married to a Mexican man, Deborah responded: "Some days I wished I hadn't known him. (Ha!). Oh well, it's already over with. (Ha!)" Deborah was most upset by the treatment her children had received from other children in their daycare center where "[t]hey get picked on quite a bit" because, she believed, they are "part Mexican."

Gendered Dynamics and Racialization

Concerns about interracial dating and marriage were articulated by educators, social workers, parents, and clergy. Joan Lamm summed up her fears as follows:

> Culture differences are real interesting too because, um, the man's approach to women in Mexico is much different than it is here. And it's very confusing to the high school students. . . Well, you will find groups of Spanish-speaking boys talking together about the girls are flattered by this, but actually they're not speaking in a flattering way, ok. So they, I don't know, they

> have a tendency that they're real charming to the girls, but they're not. The approach is not the same as an American boy's would be and sometimes the girls are a little confused and hurt by this.

Lamm, who did not speak Spanish, feared that the young boys were saying "things in spanish that would translate to whore or slut, or things that were derogatory."

Rarely did the white European American residents mention the Mexican and Mexican American women. Due to the migratory pattern, the first wave of workers was comprised of men between the ages of sixteen and forty. During the second wave a number of women migrated to work in the plant or to accompany their husbands. The third wave includes a larger percentage of families with men and women and their children. As a consequence of the migratory time sequencing and gender division of household labor, the men are more visible to the wider community. Furthermore, several other factors contribute to the Latinas' public invisibility at this stage of incorporation. Many of these women do not have access to transportation nor does Midtown offer the food products they most desire. Families pool resources and travel weekly to Des Moines, a distance of two and one half hours, to purchase groceries from a store that stocks Mexican food and other Mexican products. Lack of facility with English also contributes to their reluctance to interact with other community members. Finally, there is some indication that the Mexican and Mexican American men discourage their wives from leaving their homes unaccompanied. On the other hand, women were more likely than men to attend Sunday church services at the Catholic Church which recently started providing a monthly mass in Spanish.

The mode of incorporation shaped the gender division of the labor in the plant as well as the relationships among different community members. Such gendered relationships infused the racialization process. It is clear from this study that the relations of ruling are intertwined in complex ways that both reinforce marginalization and challenge the boundaries that many of the white community members were

trying to erect through formal and informal means. Interracial dating was particularly disturbing to those interested in maintaining the divisions between segments of the community from different class and racial-ethnic backgrounds.

As the number of Latino youth increased, white ethnic community members worried about importation of urban problems such as gang activity, use of drugs and inter-racial violence. After one incident where a fight broke about between a Latino and Anglo teenager, the high school and park have become centers for white ethnic community concerns and police surveillance. The police chief explained that: "We have had some racial tensions and some racial problems at school and basically we just put officers over there to make sure there is no violence or anything like that." He explained that the school officials called in the police when the fight broke out. He said that he now sends police officers over to the school "towards the end of the school day when people are getting out and then we monitor the traffic and the parking lot." He believes that their presence will deter further outbreaks of violence.

The park has also surfaced as another site for concerns by police and community officials. Since there are few places for young people to congregate, both Latino and Anglo youth gravitate towards the park. During the summer of 1998, another fight broke between an white ethnic teenager and a Latino youth which led to widespread fear about the so-called racial tensions and what came to be called "gang activity." While most European American adult residents we spoke to about the incident in the park blamed the Latino youth, both Anglo and Latino youth told a more nuanced story. Anglo teenager Tim Brown explained:

> . . . a sophomore beat up a Mexican kid because he drove by . . . the park and the Mexican threw a ball at his car or something and he pulled in and was asking him why he did it and the Mexican kid got up in his face and he spit in it and that was it. He just knocked him out and that was pretty much all there was. He didn't get into any trouble because the Mexican kid started it

by throwing the ball at his car, which that is how it is.

This incident seemed to ignite the fears of many Anglo residents that the Latino youth were engaging in "gang activity." Many parents now forbade their children from going to the park. Tim Brown stated that as a result of the park incident:

> During the summer, it used to be that we'd go up to the park and play basketball all the time, but really the park in the summertime now is pretty much all Mexicans and they have pretty much run all the white kids out of playing basketball, but we still do some. It has changed that way because there are a lot more now than there ever was and when they get a big group there, there is more racism against white people than there would be there by themselves.

Of course, the Latino teenagers tell a somewhat different story about the park incident and other interactions in the park. They see that the Anglo's reaction to their presence in the park is a result of racism and their discomfort with them. While gaining access to public places remains a concern for Latino residents, processes that enhance their out-migration are more salient in their narratives.

Given the housing segregation and language differences, long term residents rarely learn of the harassment and discrimination experienced by Latinos and other non-White and non-English speaking newcomers to their communities. Harassment by local police and other key actors such as Department of Motor Vehicle staff and emergency service personnel place increase stress on newcomers as they attempt to make a life for themselves in a somewhat hostile environment and contributes their their out-migration. Geographic mobility of these recent immigrants and migrants, a problem which many longer term residents point to as an indicator of their lack of commitment to the area, is either prompted by police harassment or, at least, hastened by such treatment. Yet this mobility is a source of problems for the schools, in particular, and for the town's finances in general as they lose revenue for education and other services when student censuses or other official counts are taken in their absence.

Agrarian Ideology and Racialization

Community-based constructions of, and responses to, racism and ethnic tension vary across different parts of the U.S. New residents to the rural Midwest rarely have access to advocacy organizations and other formal groups established in other locales to protect the rights of workers or community residents who experience discrimination, harassment or lack of access to vital health and social services. Since most long term residents in these towns hold onto a firm distinction between those who belong and those who are considered outsiders to the community, "newcomers" frequently face a great deal of resistance when they begin to make claims in different arenas. One significant way outsiderness is constructed is through visual markers such as one's race-ethnicity. This racial-ethnic differentiation inevitably places anyone who does not (visually, at least) appear to share the same racial-ethnic background at the margins of small town life.

High school teacher Joan Lamm articulated a widely held concern of the white European American residents that the Latinos were reluctant to become "Americanized." The cues they used to assess this process revealed their racist assumptions. Lamm explained:

> And it's real hard to say whether these people want to be Americanized, or, you know, if they're hanging on to their own culture. I mean obviously they would like to do that too, but you know some of them are a little more open about whether they also want an American part too. The kids come to school clean and well dressed, and they're very good that way. It's been a real education for all of us.

For Lamm and others, the fact that "[t]he kids come to school clean and well dressed" appeared as evidence that they were becoming "Americanized" rather than a challenge to their own stereotypes.

She pointed out that "our kids have learned from the Hispanic kids, that's what I think it should be about." When asked what she thought they learned, she responded:

> Oh, just understanding that their culture is different. You know, coming around to the fact that yeah these kids are kids and they've been raised differently so they think differently about things than we do. And that realization that not everybody is raised with the same kind of thoughts about things. They accept the kids. I have more experience with the older kids than the kids at the elementary, but very rarely do I ever hear complaints about them not getting along at the elementary.

Lamm proudly detailed one experience in which she saw the community pull together when a young Mexican girl broke her arm on the playground.

> And it was really interesting because it was a bad enough break that it could not be treated here, they had to go to Omaha. But the whole community kind of pulled together to take care of this family. And [the plant owners] provided someone to drive them to Omaha, and put the parents up in a hotel for the night, and, you know, really took care of what needed to be done.

Reports of incidents where "the whole community kind of pulled together" stand in stark contrast to the daily racism reported by the Mexican and Mexican American residents. Here we see the processes by which racial-ethnic divisions are contested as well as enforced.

The widely held belief in "agrarian ideology," a privileging of family farmers, especially those who adhere to a traditional gender division of labor and who have a multigenerational history in the region, makes it difficult for anyone who moves into the region for work in a factory or other low waged nonfarm employment to become a part of the community (see Naples 1994). Those residents who do not own farms in the community but play central professional roles such as doctor, educator, clergy are also granted a high status within the community, a consequence of class relations within these small towns.[22] Those who perform nonfarm work at minimum wage or who are receiving public assistance are therefore further marginalized within the somewhat collectively held class-based ethos of the small

town.

The privileged position of the middle class farm household with the traditional gender division of labor masks the many inequalities that have long characterized rural Midwestern communities. These patterns of class, gender, residency, and race-based inequalities serve as the grounds for denying "membership" in the community to those from non-farm working class backgrounds or who are single mothers or who have recently taken up residence as well as anyone else constructed as "an outsider." Those who dare to speak out against inequality and discrimination are further marginalized. Many more keep silent for fear of reprisals from their neighbors who are invested in seeing only the positive benefits of rural life.

As a consequence of these powerful processes, those within the marginalized categories may never acquire the designation of legitimate community member (see Naples 1996). However, certain changes in the political environment may create the grounds for shifts in designations which result in reincorporating some newcomers or disenfranchising other longer term residents. For example, when the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) raided Midtown, some of the longer term residents began to incorporate as "community members" the Latinos who held legal resident or citizenship status but were picked up in a raid and detained at the regional INS office in Omaha. Further, as the composition of the Latino community shifted from predominantly single male workers to two parent families, Anglo residents softened somewhat in the negative attitudes they expressed, although mistrust of Latinos' long-term commitment to Midtown remained strong. White European American residents often commented: "Well, many have strong family values." In keeping with the privileging of a heterosexual two-parent family form, when longer term residents are divorced or turn to welfare for economic support they frequently experience alienation from the perceived "community-at-large."[23]

Initial research indicated only reluctant attempts in the early 1990s to deal with the perceived

differences. Many white European American residents contrasted the ideal-typical traditional resident with the newcomers. And, of course, the Latinos were viewed as not measuring up for a variety of reasons. The racism implicit in many comments about the Mexicans and Mexican Americans was couched in discussions of the white residents' fear of increased crime, a growing underclass, and a rise in the cost of education and social services. By the end of the 1990s, a number of significant shifts had taken place. Since a growing proportion of Latinos were remaining for longer periods than in the early 1990s, their presence was now viewed as a permanent feature of the community. Furthermore, as the Latino children entered the schools, they formed friendships with Anglo children thus breaking down divisions between residents of different racial-ethnic backgrounds.

Conclusion

Rather than viewing the state as a static and concrete entity with fixed and bounded policy arenas, this analysis defines the state in dynamic relationship with those who are targets of specific state interventions. The Mexican and Mexican American residents whose perspectives form the basis for this analysis experience the state as fluid, ever changing and woven throughout their social lives. The features of the state so defined can only be captured through a socially embedded and historically specific analysis. I am not arguing that our view on the state should come solely from the point of view of those whose lives are most affected by specific state interventions. What I am arguing, however, is that we need to be aware of the limits of each angle we choose to privilege. An embedded analysis provides a view into the complex processes that are part and parcel of the state yet are obscured when we start our exploration from places far from the ground.

Key lessons from this study include: (1) a socially embedded exploration can deepen our understanding of how migrants and other non-white racial-ethnic groups are incorporated into the economic, social, political, and cultural life of diverse communities, (2) social regulatory dynamics are

experienced differently by similar racial-ethnic groups depending on the interaction of historical, economic, political, cultural, social, and regional factors, (3) the social regulatory role of the state is fluid, changes over time and is influenced by the extent to which other sites and community members act as extended agents of the state.

Citizenship defined as the right to vote and the "opportunity to earn" (Shklar 1991:3) captures the contradictory place of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in United States society today (also see Thomas 1985). For many who have the right to vote, their right to earn is firmly circumscribed by the segmentation and segregation of the labor market and enhanced by discrimination and other racist practices in employment and community settings. Lisa Lowe (1996:2) effectively demonstrates that "the collectively forged images, histories, and narratives that place, displace, and replace individuals in relation to the national polity – powerfully shapes who the citizenry is, where they dwell, what they remember, and what they forget." As Anna Ortega, a United States citizen in her 30's who moved from Laredo to Midtown with her family, explained:

> But a lot of the **Americans** think that because we're brown everybody comes from Mexico and its not like that you know. Because you can be Mexican, Hispanic, and you can come from Texas; you can come from Chicago. . . You can be born and raised in California . . . [They think]: They're from Mexico. They're all illegals." (Italics added).

Ortega distinguished herself from the white North European American residents who she defined as "Americans." The processes of racialization and social regulation create a boundary between "real Americans" (read: white European Americans) and other Americans. These boundaries are maintained by ideological constructions as well as material practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural patterns (see Naples 1994). Those who do not fit the narrow definition of "American" feel themselves outside the category despite their legal status as citizens.

Given the conflation of Mexican Americans and documented Mexican workers with undocumented workers, the right to vote may be less a signifier of citizenship than the opportunity to earn a living wage. The Mexican and Mexican American factory workers worked in the least desirable jobs in the plant and faced verbal and behavioral abuse by supervisors and white co-workers. Initially Latinos in Midtown were treated as one homogenous group by the employer as well as the Anglo residents. However, actions taken by the INS reshaped the composition of the Mexican and Mexican American community as well as the town's relationship to the different segments of the Latino population and the recruitment practices of the local employer. The mode of incorporation subsequently changed in response to both state intervention and increased community awareness.[24]

The most obvious arena regulating United States citizenship is the policies and practices of the INS. INS controls entry through federally defined immigration quotas and border patrol activities. Immigration quotas and border patrol policies are developed in direct dialogue with the labor needs of capitalism. Yet, in some instances INS activities directly circumscribe the efforts of certain employers to exploit a low wage and relatively powerless work force. INS actions posed such a challenge to the owners of the food processing plant when they deported a large percentage of their workforce.

Processes regulating citizenship are also evident at other junctures of civic and public life. From the point of view of the Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Midtown these spheres include the local police, state licensing agencies (e.g. motor vehicle bureau), housing policies and practices, health care and social services agencies, and education, among other arenas. Formal and informal agents representing these different spheres actively extend the reach of the state as a controlling force in the lives of the new residents. On the other hand, actions taken by representatives of the state also serve to reposition the Latinos as deserving members of the local community. These contradictory tendencies act on different members of the Latino community in different ways depending upon the mode of

incorporation, their facility with English and their "legal" status.[25] The racialization process is also embedded in dynamics of class and gender.

The power to control movement is one of the most potent strategies for circumscribing citizenship claims (see Massey 1994; Rose 1993). It also masks the interdependence of dominant groups with those kept on the margins. Bell hooks (1990) highlights this contradiction in analyzing the dynamics of domination and resistance in the segregated community in which she grew up.[26] Hooks also reminds us that such marginalized places can also serve as sites of resistance and "a space for radical openness which allows the creation of a counter-hegemonic politics" (hooks 1990 summarized by Rose 1993:156; also see Evans 1979; Fraser 1989). Despite the potential of such physical marginalization for radical challenge to the dominant class and racial-ethnic group, the diversity of the Mexican and Mexican American community and the different migratory patterns and the out-migration of the workers and their families, undermines the radical potential of their marginialized status.

The concepts of modes of incorporation, racialization, social regulation, and relations of ruling drawn from political economic theories of immigration, racial formation and postcoloinial theories, and feminist materialist state theory offer four conceptual frames that enhance our view of the complicated processes by which Latinos and other transnational racial-ethnic groups are incorporated into or prevented from making claims on the state. By exploring these processes we also deepen our understanding of the contradictions embedded in the processes of social regulation as well as the ways in communities can be enriched by the social restructuring that accompanies economic change in the rural Midwest.

Endnotes

1. Their presence in the Midwest rose by 44% between 1980 and 1990, with a high of 67.7% in Minnesota and a low in Iowa of 27.8% (PrairieFire 1992). The most recent data report that the Hispanic population increased from 32,692 in 1990 to 53,092 in Iowa, a 62.6% increase (Goudy and Burke 1998).

2. Such efforts should not be viewed as only recent phenomena. In many small white European American communities throughout the Midwest, white supremacist groups have long been active although their presence remains firmly denied by town officials and long term residents (see Fink 1998).

3. Support for this research was provided through a National Institute of Mental Health grant to the Center for Family Research in Rural Mental Health at Iowa State University, a Faculty Senate Grant from University of California, Irvine, and a UC Mexus Grant. I am grateful to Erica Bornstein, Morgan Perry and Kristine Schwebach for their diligent research assistance and Chris Schwendinger, Brenda Patton and Cynthia Gaunt for skillful tape transcription. I especially wish to thank Gabriela Flora and Lionel Cantú for their multifaceted research assistance and translation of interviews. I owe a special debt to the many community members who opened their homes, gave of their time and shared their experiences and perspectives with us.

4. Some of the Mexican workers are recent immigrants from several towns in Mexico and others are long term residents of the United States. Consequently, I will refer to these workers as Mexican and Mexican American. None of the white residents referred to the new residents as "Chicanos" including the Mexican American community worker and missionary working with the "Hispanic population" [sic] in Midtown. The only terms heard throughout the field work were "Mexican" and "Hispanic." In fact, white European American residents did not differentiate between Mexicans and Mexican American residents referring to all individuals of Mexican descent as Mexicans or Hispanic.

5. See Balibar and Wallerstein 1991; Brecher and Costello 1994; Chavez 1992; Gutierrez 1995; Gutierrez-Jones 1995; Jameson and Miyoshi 1999; Ong, Bonacich, and Cheng 1994; Portes and Grosfoguel 1994; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Portes and Walton 1981; Robinson 1993; Sassen 1990, 1998; Smith, Wallerstein and Evers 1984; Wallerstein 1976.

6. See especially Granovetter 1985; Mingione 1991; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Thomas 1985.

7. See Balibar and Wallerstein 1991; Espiritu 1992; Frankenberg 1993; Glenn 1992; Lamphere 1993; Lowe 1996; Omi and Winant 1986; Winant 1994.

8. See especially Abramovitz 1988; Alexander and Mohanty 1997; Fraser 1989; Glenn 1986; Gordon 1990; Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Mohanty, Russo, and Torres 1991; Ong 1999; and Rajan 1993.

9. See Fink 1992; Fitchen 1991; Monney 1986; Naples 1994, 1996.

10. The class, gender and race subtexts include the division of labor within the state; the exclusion of

women, low income people, and people of color from the design of state policy; gendered assumptions about women's and men's unpaid and paid work; gender, race and class-differentiated social policies (e.g. Widow's Pensions or Mother's Aid, Workmen's Compensation and protective labor legislation); and class, gender and race policy outcomes such as the "feminization of poverty" (Pearce 1990). See Abramovitz 1988; Naples 1998; Gordon 1990; Orloff 1993; Nelson 1990; Smith 1987,

11. For notable exceptions, see Alexander 1992; Chang 1994; Silverblatt 1991; Stoler 1989.

12. See Lisa Lowe (1996) and Aihwa Ong (1999). Ong (1999:5) demonstrates the power of an "analytic framework" that incorporates both "the economic rationalities of globalization and the cultural dynamics that shape human and political responses." As Ong (1999:11) argues:

> When an approach to cultural globalization seeks merely to sketch out universalizing trends rather than deal with actually existing structures of power and situated cultural processes, the analysis cries out for a sense of political economy and situated ethnography. What are the mechanisms of power that enable the mobility, as well as the localization and disciplining, of diverse populations within these transnational systems? How are cultural flows and human imagination conditioned and shaped within these new relations of global inequalities?

13. See Abramovitz 1988; Fraser 1989; Gordon 1990; Naples 1998; Nelson 1990; Orloff 1993; Sarvasy 1992; Quadagno 1994; Valocchi 1994; Walby 1990.

14. While, for the most part, Mingione's (1991: 34-35) is in agreement with Wallerstein's (1983) approach to the world economy, he does not completely adopt his framework. Since much of my discussion here derives from Mingione elaboration on "social regulation," I refer to the larger theoretical project as the "embedded political economy framework."

15. Dorothy Smith's (1987:3) formulation of "the relations of ruling" captures "the intersection of the institutions organizing and regulating society" and "grasps power, organization, direction, and regulation as more pervasively structured than can be expressed in traditional concepts provided by the discourses of power." Smith's (1987) conceptual frame dovetails well with the notion of "embeddedness" of economic processes that provide the grounds for certain social regulatory practices as well as the racial formation perspective outlined above.

16. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (1994:13) suggest "the term 'transnational' to problematize a purely locational politics of global-local or center-periphery."

17. Under the "right-to-work" law, "an employer may not refuse employment or dismiss a person if the only ground of refusal is" their union membership, lack of union membership, or refusal to join a union (Iowa Department of Economic Development 1989:44).

18. Farm income as a proportion of income from all sources including transfer payments and income from interest and dividends ranged from a low of 3 percent in 1983 to a high of 21 percent in 1987 for the years 1976 to 1989 (United States Department of Commerce 1976-1989).

19. The recent expansion of low wage factories across the Midwest is linked to practices utilized by

multinational corporations in other regions of the world (see Fernández-Kelly 1983; Kramel 1990; Ong 1990). Some factories are opening in rural areas without a workforce sufficient for operation in order to control the types of workers they recruit. Such factories in the rural Midwest are recruiting Asian, Asian American as well as Latino workers, many of whom have little facility with English. These strategies increase the fragmentation of the workforce and diminish the potential for workers to organize against unfair labor practices.

20. A second consequence of the plant expansion and recruitment process was a shift in the gender composition of the workforce. Before the expansion seventy percent of the plant employers were women. The newly recruited workers were primarily Mexican and Mexican American men. In a 1993 interview Landers reported that the percentage distribution shifted. At that time only thirty percent of the plant employees were women. The percentage of women employees has risen slightly between 1993 and 1998.

21. The term "Anglo" has a very specific racial-ethnic meaning that may not capture accurately the diversity within the white population in Midtown. I use it here as a short hand to refer to white European Americans living in rural Iowa.

22. In Midtown, Iowa, the Economic Development Corporation decided to build a new medical facility as well as a new home for the physician who accepted their office to set up his office in town.

23. To further contextualize the analysis begun in this paper we must explore the household division of labor and highlight changes in gender relations that occur as a result of migration to rural Iowa. Next, we need to trace the effects of increased contact between the Latinos and the "Anglos" on the redefinition of the perceived cultural gender differences. Further, we require detailed information on the broader household survival strategies as they extend back to the communities of origin and forward to the communities where former workers and their families have migrated (also see Halperin 1990). These new dimensions must be woven in and through the patchwork quilt of community and economic processes outlined in this paper which in turn must be more fully elaborated.

24. Missing from the present analysis is a more deeply embedded exploration of the political economy of agriculture with particular attention to the specific products processed and marketed by the Midtown plant. Such a deeper analysis will involve explicating the regional economy in which Midtown is embedded as well as tying the specifics of this regional economy to the broader historic patterns and political and economic trends. Further complicating the direction of this study is the passage of the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Passage of NAFTA may alter migration flows of Mexican, Mexican American, as well as white European American residents in the rural Midwest. Such shifts may further complicate the modes of incorporation, social regulatory processes, and racial formation in small rural communities like Midtown.

25. Robert Thomas (1985:105-6) effectively ties legal status with workplace organization in his study of the lettuce industry. He notes:

> "Each category of citizenship -- citizen, documented, and undocumented -- represents a different level of vulnerability or susceptibility to external influence based on the formal legal mechanisms for controlling and legitimating claims on the polity. Thus if citizenship were to be

redefined in terms of the level of political vulnerability, the categories would be ranked in the following fashion: citizen = low; documented immigrant = medium; undocumented immigrant = high."

26. Gillian Rose (1993:155-156) sums up hooks argument as follows:

"Its segregation on the margin of the town belies its importance to the town's economy, however, for many of its service workers -- without which the town would cease to function -- live there. The marginal community is also part of the town in the sense that its boundaries are not only the physical railway tracks but also the less tangible 'oppressive boundaries set by race, sex, and class domination'. Its poverty is structured by those social relations."

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